



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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KING MACKEREL COMMERCIAL FISHERY CLOSED IN WESTERN GULF FROM U.S./MEXICO BORDER TO ALABAMA/FLORIDA BOUNDARY

The commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the western zone is closed, **effective 12:00 noon (local time) October 20, 2004**, through June 30, 2005. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) projected that the western zone commercial quota of 1.01 million pounds of king mackerel for the 2004/2005 fishing year would be reached on October 20, 2004. With this action, the king mackerel commercial fishery in the Gulf of Mexico is closed from the U.S./Mexico border to the Alabama/Florida boundary (see reverse). This closure time should allow ample time for vessels to return safely to port.

Closure of the commercial king mackerel fishery in the western Gulf complies with regulations implemented under the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (FMP) and is necessary to protect the Gulf group king mackerel resource. In cooperative actions, Gulf states (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama) are expected to close commercial harvest of king mackerel concurrently in adjoining state waters.

During the closure period, no person aboard a vessel for which a commercial permit for king mackerel has been issued may fish for Gulf group king mackerel in federal waters of the closed zone or subzone. There are exceptions, however, for a person aboard a charter vessel or headboat. A person aboard a vessel that has a valid charter/headboat permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish may continue to retain king mackerel in or from the closed zone/subzone under the 2-fish daily bag limit, provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Charter vessels or headboats that hold a commercial king mackerel permit are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat when they carry a

passenger who pays a fee or when more than three persons are aboard, including operator and crew.

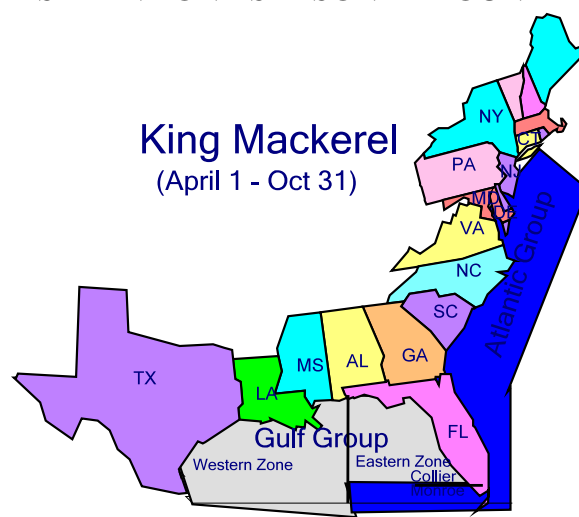
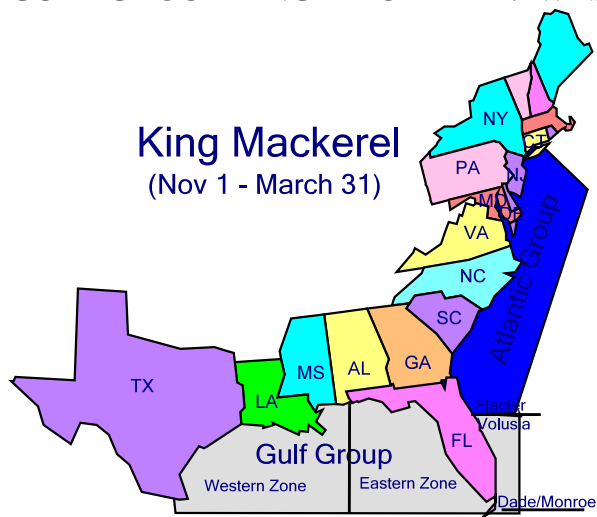
During the closure, no king mackerel caught in the closed zone/subzone may be purchased, bartered, traded, or sold. This includes recreational and tournament caught fish. The prohibition of sale, however, does not apply to trade in king mackerel that were harvested, landed ashore and bartered, traded, or sold before the closure and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

Quotas and closure provisions for mackerel fisheries were developed in the FMP jointly by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. In compliance with the FMP, an annual commercial quota of 3.26 million pounds was established for Gulf group king mackerel. This quota was divided into commercial quotas of 1.01 million pounds for the western zone and 2.25 million pounds for the eastern zone off Florida. Regulations implemented under the FMP require closure of any segment of the commercial fishery when its quota is reached or is projected to be reached.

To report violations of commercial trip limits or closures, contact NOAA Fisheries Law Enforcement Division at **727-570-5344 or 1-800/853-1964**. NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Additional information on southeastern fisheries may be found on the Web sites of the Gulf of Mexico (<http://www.gulfcouncil.org>) or South Atlantic (<http://www.safmc.nmfs.gov>) Fishery Management Council; they may be contacted by e-mail at gulf.council@noaa.gov or safmc@noaa.gov respectively.

GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL: WESTERN AND EASTERN ZONE SEASONAL BOUNDARIES



GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL: STATUS OF QUOTAS AND DAILY TRIP/LANDING LIMITS FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERIES FOR THE 2004/2005 FISHING YEAR

ZONE/SUBZONE	QUOTA (POUNDS, lb)	DAILY VESSEL TRIP LIMITS	DURATION OF TRIP LIMITS			STATUS	
						BEGINNING	CURRENT
EASTERN ZONE (Florida)	2,250,000						
East Coast Subzone ¹	1,040,625	50 Fish	Nov 1, 2004	until	780,469 lb	Opens: Nov 1, 2004	Closes: Apr 1, 2005
Hook and Line		75 Fish ²	Feb 1, 2005	until	Mar 31, 2005		
West Coast Subzones	1,209,375						
<u>Northern</u>							
Hook and Line	168,750	1,250 lb	Jul 1, 2003	until	126,563 lb	Opened: Jul 1, 2004	Open: 1,250 lb/day
		500 lb		until	168,750 lb		
		0 lb		until	Jul 1, 2005		
<u>Southern</u>							
Hook and Line	520,312	1,250 lb	Jul 1, 2003	until	390,234 lb	Opened: Jul 1, 2004	Open: 1,250 lb/day
		500 lb		until	520,312 lb		
		0 lb		until	Jul 1, 2005		
Gillnet	520,312	25,000 lb	Jan 18, 2005	until	520,312 lb	Opens: Jan 18, 2005	Closes: June 30, 2005 ³
WESTERN ZONE (TX-AL)	1,010,000	3,000 lb	Jul 1, 2004	until	1,010,000 lb	Opened: Jul 1, 2004	Closed Oct 20, 2004
Hook and Line		0 lb	Oct 20, 2004	until	Jul 1, 2005		

¹ The Florida east coast subzone, located between the Flagler/Volusia and Miami-Dade/Monroe County boundaries, exists only from November 1 through March 31, when the Gulf migratory group of king mackerel extends into that area. From April 1 through October 31, king mackerel landed in that area belong to the Atlantic migratory group.

² Trip limit increases from 50 to 75 fish/day on February 1, 2005, if NOAA Fisheries determines that less than 75 percent, or 780,469 pounds, of the Florida east coast subzone quota will be harvested by that date.

³ If the gillnet quota is not harvested during the 2004/2005 fishing season, this fishery automatically will close from July 1, 2005, until 6:00 a.m., January 17, 2006.